

Education Committee
Support Increased Funding for Charter Schools and Educational Equity

Wednesday March 3, 2021

Thank you, members of the Education Committee for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Erika Hendrick, and I am here to speak to you as a member of the Integrated Day Charter School in Norwich. My daughter Gracie is in the 5th grade, and my son Sawyer is now in the 11th grade, having attended IDCS from Pre-K through 8th grade. I have spent much time volunteering and fundraising for the school, coordinating the basket raffle, and helping with events. There are many parents who dedicate much of their time and money to helping to raise money for necessary improvements and resources.

There are so many reasons IDCS is an amazing school and community. Our students and families come from diverse cultural, socio-economic, and racial backgrounds, and we have events throughout the year which celebrate that diversity, as well as provide opportunities for service-learning and community-building. Our students complete several research presentations each year, a practice that teaches them to be self-directed learners, as well as confident and experienced public speakers. It also gives them the opportunity to develop a deeper knowledge about topics of their own interests and to share this knowledge with their peers. By the time these students are in middle school, their projects are insightful and creative, and often demonstrate a keen awareness of contemporary issues and the world around them.

In coordinating the basket raffle, and volunteering for fundraising events, I have seen parents and volunteers spend hours of their own time after work and on weekends planning and preparing for these events to ensure their children have the resources and opportunities necessary for the education they deserve. Our basket raffle has provided funding for field trips, updated technology, and classroom resources. Our students deserve funding equitable to other public-school students. Our students need access to books and resources that will assist them in continuing to create the outstanding research presentations they are capable of. As education in all arenas becomes more and more dependent on an understanding of technology, our students will need to have access to software and instructional computer programs to be able to compete with students from town and city public schools. Increased funding for our students can help us to meet these needs.

I am asking that you please support increased funding for charter schools, and to provide that funding based on student need, and not on the town or community in which they live. This will be the first step toward equitable education for all public-school students in Connecticut.

Thank you so much for your support and leadership.

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